

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

Sub  
a,

- 1 1. A method of providing a call forwarding service,  
2 comprising:  
3 storing information on the amount of time a  
4 telephone is allowed to ring before a call to the  
5 telephone is forwarded; and  
6 forwarding a call to said telephone after the  
7 telephone rings for said amount of time.
- 1 2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
2 means for allowing a call forwarding service  
3 subscriber to set the amount of time said telephone is  
4 allowed to ring before a call to said telephone is  
5 forwarded.
- 1 3. The method of claim 2, wherein the stored  
2 information is a ring count and wherein said means for  
3 allowing a call forwarding service subscriber to set the  
4 amount of time said telephone is allowed to ring includes  
5 an interface for receiving ring count information from  
6 said service subscriber via a telephone.
- 1 4. The method of claim 2, wherein the stored  
2 information is a ring count and wherein said means for  
3 allowing a call forwarding service subscriber to set the  
4 amount of time said telephone is allowed to ring includes

5 an interface for receiving ring count information from  
6 said service subscriber via the Internet.

1 5. The method of claim 1 wherein storing information on  
2 the amount of time a telephone is allowed to ring before  
3 a call to the telephone is forwarded includes:

4 receiving ring count information from a  
5 telephone service subscriber; and  
6 storing the ring count information in a call  
7 processing record.

1 6. The method of claim 5, further comprising:

2 a voice mail system the voice mail system  
3 including:

4 means for interfacing with said telephone  
5 service subscriber; and

6 means for modifying the stored ring count  
7 information in the call processing record.

1 7. The method of claim 1, wherein prior to forwarding  
2 said call the method further comprises:

3 setting a trigger on a telephone line coupled  
4 to said telephone;

5 in response to activation of said trigger by a  
6 call directed to said telephone, sending a message to a  
7 service control point;

8 receiving a control message from said service  
9 control point; and

10           in response to said message setting a timer  
11   used to measure the amount of time the telephone rings.

1   8.   The method of claim 7, further comprising:  
2           in response to the timer reaching said amount  
3   of time a telephone is allowed to ring, sending another  
4   message to the service control point; and  
5           receiving a message from the service control  
6   point including a telephone number to be used to forward  
7   said call.

1   9.   The method of claim 7, further comprising:  
2           operating the service control point to use a  
3   next event list to determine the telephone number to be  
4   used to forward said call.

1   10.  A call forwarding method, the method comprising:  
2           storing in a call processing record information  
3   on the amount of time a telephone is allowed to ring  
4   before being forwarded;  
5           monitoring the amount of time said telephone is  
6   allowed to ring in response to a call; and  
7           forwarding said call when said call goes  
8   unanswered for said amount of time.

1   11.  The call forwarding method of claim 10, wherein the  
2   step of monitoring the amount of time said telephone is  
3   allowed to ring includes:

4            setting a timer at a telephone switch which is  
5   coupled to said telephone.

1   12.   The call forwarding method of claim 11, wherein said  
2   timer is a next event list timer.

1   13.   The call forwarding method of claim 11, wherein the  
2   step of forwarding said call includes the step of:

3            operating a service control point coupled to  
4   said telephone switch to cause said telephone switch to  
5   forward the call to a telephone number indicated by a  
6   next event list included in said CPR.

1   14.   The call forwarding method of claim 13, further  
2   comprising the step of:

3            receiving said information on the amount of  
4   time a telephone is allowed to ring from a telephone  
5   service subscriber.

1   15.   The call forwarding method of claim 14, wherein said  
2   information is a ring count which indicates the number of  
3   times a phone is allowed to ring before said call is  
4   forwarded.

1   16.   The call forwarding method of claim 15, wherein  
2   receiving said information includes:

3            receiving the ring count from the telephone  
4   service subscriber via the Internet.

1 17 The call forwarding method of claim 15, wherein  
2 receiving said information includes:  
3 receiving the ring count from the telephone  
4 service subscriber in the form of DTMF input.

1 18. A telephone system capable of forwarding a call,  
2 comprising:  
3 a telephone for receiving calls;  
4 a service control point including information  
5 on the amount of time said telephone should be allowed to  
6 ring before forwarding a call directed to said telephone  
7 to another destination; and  
8 a telephone switch coupled to said control  
9 point and to said telephone for detecting the amount of  
10 time said telephone rings and for forwarding calls.

1 19. The telephone system of claim 18, further  
2 comprising:  
3  
4 a plurality of call processing records stored  
5 at said service control point, one of said call  
6 processing records corresponding to said telephone and  
7 including said information on the amount of time said  
8 telephone should be allowed to ring.

1 20. The telephone system of claim 19, wherein said  
2 information is ring count information.

1 21. The telephone system of claim 20, further comprising  
2 means for allowing a telephone service subscriber to set  
3 the ring count information in the call processing record  
4 corresponding to said telephone.

1 22. The telephone system of claim 20, wherein said means  
2 for allowing includes:  
3 an interactive voice response peripheral device  
4 coupled to said service control point.

1 23. The telephone system of claim 22, wherein said means  
2 for allowing includes:  
3 an Internet access server coupled to said  
4 service control point.

1 24. The telephone system of claim 22, wherein said means  
2 for allowing further includes:  
3 a voice mail peripheral device including an  
4 interface for allowing said telephone service subscriber  
5 to modify the ring count information in said service  
6 control point.